CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.879
28 June 2001

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-NINTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 28 June 2001, at 10.10 a.m.

President Mr. Carlos Amat Fores (Cuba)

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The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish) I declare open the 879th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament

Distinguished delegates, we have learned with deep sorrow about a tragic earthquake that struck Peru earlier this week, taking a heavy toll in lives and material damage I am sure that you all join me in extending our sympathy and condolences to the survivors and to the Government and people of Peru on this sad occasion

As you are aware, Ambassador Anne Anderson of Ireland will soon be relinquishing her post as representative of her country to the Conference During the time that she has spent here, since July 1995, she has presented the position of her Government with great skill and elegance, and also, I might say, in the unaffected manner so characteristic of her Her personal contribution to our collective efforts and, in particular, her sensitivity to the aspirations of the non-member States applying for membership of the Conference have been valued by all and have contributed substantially to two successive expansions of the membership of the Conference She had the honour to be her country's first representative to the Conference on Disarmament when, in 1999, Ireland was admitted as a full member On behalf of us all, I would like to convey to Ambassador Anderson our very best wishes for her continued success and personal happiness

I have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of Ireland and Algeria

Before giving them the floor, however, I would like to make an opening statement on Cuba's assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament

Before looking in detail at how we see our work proceeding during this presidency, allow me to make a few general comments

First, I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the efforts made by all the distinguished ambassadors who have preceded me in this important post None of them has spared time or energy in their endeavour to reach an agreement on the Conference's programme of work If the necessary consensus eluded them, this was clearly due to such factors as the current political, strategic and international security situation, which has direct repercussions on this sole multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament, and responsibility therefor can in no way be laid at the door of those who have led us and guided us in our work If the consensus in the Conference on Disarmament were directly proportional to the efforts and dedication manifested by its presidents, at this juncture we would most definitely be negotiating general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control

As we assume our presidency, I would like to assure you that we are fully aware of the high honour and the responsibility which this office entails We too shall spare no effort in endeavouring to steer this vessel safely to harbour If in the end this goal eludes us, you shall not hear me state that, while victory has many fathers, defeat is an orphan In both cases, responsibility is entirely collective

(The President)

Let us recall that the Conference on Disarmament is the sole multilateral negotiating forum in the field of disarmament and arms control and that, as such, great hopes have been vested in it by the international community. The Conference on Disarmament has negotiated important legally binding international instruments that constitute major landmarks in the history of disarmament and non-proliferation.

I am fully aware, however, that today, as never before, the Conference on Disarmament faces great difficulties in achieving the purposes for which it was set up without further setbacks. The prevailing international situation in the field of disarmament and arms control, and the growing trends towards hegemonic unilateralism displayed by the world's super-Power are directly reflected in this forum and in the stalemate in which it finds itself.

At the same time, I am one of those who believe that, if the Conference on Disarmament did not exist, we would be working to create it. The Conference is a forum of incontestable validity and relevance, in which a valuable store of experience and knowledge relating to the cause of disarmament is being accumulated and must not be wasted.

If we are to consolidate the substantial benefits to international peace and security which would result from progress in disarmament and arms control, we must be able to count on the political will of all, manifested with the utmost sincerity and a determination to comply scrupulously with the imperatives placed upon us by the international community.

Moving on now to more specific considerations relating to our work in the presidency, I would like to make the following points.

I intend my work as President to continue the work carried out by my predecessor, our friend Ambassador Camilo Reyes. When he concluded his term of office, Ambassador Reyes left the way open for us to confirm our interest in revitalizing the Conference on Disarmament. We will work to achieve progress both in developing the work of the three special coordinators that we have appointed and in the substantive issues outlined in the Amorim proposal, as contained in document CD/1624.

I plan to conduct intensive consultations on the programme of work on the basis of this proposal, which, as I understand it, all member delegations of the Conference wish to retain as the basis for reaching agreement on the programme of work.

I also intend to conduct bilateral consultations with as many delegations as possible and naturally we are open to any suggestions, proposals or ideas which could be useful in our task of reaching consensus on the programme of work. Key importance clearly attaches to exchanges with the coordinators of the three regional groups and China, since they represent the positions and viewpoints of their respective groups.

We, likewise, shall maintain close coordination with all of you and I trust that I can count on your collaboration and support.

(The President)

Before concluding, I would like to reiterate my appreciation to the distinguished ambassadors who have preceded me in this post, and most especially Ambassador Camilo Reyes, my immediate predecessor, for their advice and suggestions, always so useful and timely.

To Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference, to Mr. Enrique Roman-Morey, Deputy Secretary-General, and to the entire staff of the secretariat and the interpreters, I express our trust that we can continue to count on your valuable cooperation.

I now give the floor to the representative of Ireland, Ambassador Anne Anderson.

Ms. ANDERSON (Ireland): Mr. President, I thank you for your very kind and very personal words, which I appreciate greatly. I convey my congratulations on your assumption of office and assure you of my delegation's support throughout your presidency.

Some time ago a departing colleague suggested a rule of thumb which allowed a farewell statement proportionate to the length of stay of the ambassador - a page for every year. I feel it is my duty to inform you at the outset that I have served in Geneva for six years, and I hope that that news will not be greeted with too much dismay!

For the first four years of my assignment, I was present in this room as an observer. For the past two years, as you pointed out earlier, Ireland has had the privilege of membership.

I was very honoured that we became a member of the Conference on Disarmament during my time as ambassador. With Ireland's history in the disarmament area, I felt deeply that we belonged in this forum and had something useful to contribute here.

A minor irony of history is that, 40 years ago, Ireland was approached to accept a nomination to one of the five Western seats in the then newly formed Disarmament Committee, which had a total membership of 18. It seems that we turned down the offer at the time because of staff shortages in our diplomatic service! An application for admission to this successor body, the Conference on Disarmament, was submitted in 1982 and we were finally admitted in 1999 after a 17-year wait.

On the day of our admission, I said that our sustained effort to secure membership was an act of faith in the future of the Conference on Disarmament. Despite being sorely tested, that faith remains. I believe that this body can and will recover its sense of purpose.

In looking at how and why we have lost that sense of purpose, the starting point is our mandate. Perhaps the most hallowed phrase in this room is that the Conference on Disarmament is the sole multilateral negotiating forum in the disarmament area. That phrase conveys a fine sense of our vocation and we use it repeatedly to urge ourselves to action.

But each of the elements bears further examination. "Sole" - true of course that we are the only standing forum but we are all increasingly aware of the unfavourable comparisons with

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successful examples of ad hoc negotiation. "Negotiating forum" - critical indeed to maintain that focus so that the Conference does not become a talking shop. But in the real world, the distinctions are not always watertight: purposeful discussion can lead to pre-negotiation which can lead to negotiation. In focusing our vision, it is important that we take care not to narrow it unduly.

It is on the term "multilateral" that I would particularly like to pause, however. Over the past few years, to explain and excuse the long paralysis, we have reached for the explanation that the Conference on Disarmament can only act when the overall security climate is conducive - in effect that, though a multilateral forum, we are hostage to key bilateral relationships.

Realism of course dictates that what happens in the Conference on Disarmament reflects developments on the outside. At the same time, it does not seem unduly ambitious to hope for some movement in the opposite direction - that progress or lack of it in the Conference might affect, even in a modest way, the perspectives of key players.

Regrettably, we have seen little of this in the past few years. Outside our circle here, there is scant evidence that the prolonged inactivity of this body is causing any real concern. The opportunity cost of a stalled Conference on Disarmament does not seem to weigh heavily in key capitals.

And yet even those who appear to feel they have least need of this body cannot be without concern. First, if I might adapt the phrase, diplomacy abhors a vacuum. If our proceedings are not making things better, they risk making things worse. In the absence of serious work here, national statements all too easily become vehicles by which differences are sharpened and deepened rather than attempting to find common ground on which differences might first co-exist and eventually be resolved. Second, the assumption that the Conference on Disarmament can be put into cold storage for long periods, and then taken out again for business as usual when there is a particular purpose to be served, could prove flawed. One cannot exclude that the atrophy which comes from prolonged disuse may do permanent damage.

We look to the Conference on Disarmament for the exercise of responsible multilateralism.

What is the essence of responsible multilateralism? It is a balance: on the one hand, a recognition of the space which key actors require for bilateral policy formulation; on the other hand, a responsiveness by those key players to broadly representative views of the international community.

It would be difficult to assert that we have got the balance right. Currently new strategic directions are being explored and new strategic bargains are being canvassed, while the Conference on Disarmament risks becoming an irrelevant sideshow.

One has the impression sometimes, at least in the security area, that multilateralism is regarded as the self-indulgence of small nations. In fact, it is critical in terms both of

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methodology and outcomes. It is the means of giving a voice to populations whose lives and futures are at stake in strategic decision-making. It creates a sense of ownership of the outcomes negotiated. And it is also, in our view, the best way to achieve one of the main goals of disarmament - the essential irreversibility of the process.

The ending of cold war rigidities might have been expected to usher in a period of vibrant and fluid multilateralism. So far this has not happened and we need to ask ourselves why.

Perhaps we misjudged the transition period required. The ending of the cold war is sometimes spoken of as if it occurred on a single date and by general acclaim. The reality of course is much more complex and there was bound to be a time lag before the multilateral disarmament machinery caught up. But sufficient time has now elapsed for us to have found our voice and our role.

Part of the problem may also lie in the fact that our structures have not adapted to the new environment. The end of the rigidities of the cold war begs the question why such rigidities should continue in bodies which were established to deal with the consequences of the cold war. I shall revert to that in a Conference on Disarmament context in a moment.

More generally, I want to assert our strong belief that the more fluid, less polar, circumstances in which security matters have come to be considered create opportunities for new coalitions of action, which are capable of attracting widespread, committed and effective support.

We see the New Agenda Coalition as one example of such an approach. In 1998, Ireland came together with six other countries to form this Coalition. With its diverse membership, the New Agenda Coalition owes its cohesion to the shared conviction of its members that, in current circumstances, there can be a seamless process of negotiation and agreement to the elimination of the ultimate weapons of mass destruction - nuclear weapons.

The New Agenda objective is an ambitious one - to try to give substance and reality to what was often expressed as a goal under the old rigidities but which had little prospect of agreement on a multilateral basis. The road down which we are travelling is not and was never going to be an easy one. But we believe that our participation as a group in the NPT Review Conference last year did help to strengthen the outcome, and in particular helped to secure the 13-step guide, which is a critical part of that outcome. We are working with out partners on continuing to define the future role for the Coalition.

The New Agenda Coalition is just one example. There can be many others. The basic point I want to make is that the legitimacy of multilateralism needs to be constantly reasserted, nowhere more so than in the disarmament area, and never more so than now, at a time of radical reassessment of the international security architecture.

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Coming to the substantive work of the Conference on Disarmament, my delegation has made clear that we regard the Amorim proposals as a well balanced basis for agreement on a work programme.

From what I have said today, and from practically every statement that I have made during six years in this room, it will be obvious that, for Ireland, nuclear disarmament lies at the heart of the work of this Conference. We want to see the establishment of an appropriate subsidiary body at the earliest possible date.

We also, like so many others, wish to see the Conference on Disarmament begin immediately negotiation on a treaty dealing with fissile material on the basis of the Shannon mandate. For those who are serious about wanting to achieve nuclear disarmament, banning the production of weapon-usable fissile material is, like the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty, an essential, not optional, step.

We also see merit in embarking on a process which will eventually lead to a legal agreement for the non-weaponization of outer space. We recognize there is much to be done in establishing a common understanding of terms but see work in this area as an opportunity for this body to address an issue which will grow in importance, and danger in the twenty-first century. Without a willingness to address the matter seriously in a negotiating forum, the possibility of the weaponization of outer space grows annually to the point where it too would have to become the subject of a non-proliferation effort.

Globalization may be an over-used and under-defined term but if ever there was an appropriate area for a global approach, it is surely in seeking to prevent outer space becoming humankind's next battlefield.

We were all aware of the sense of relief in the Conference last week when the three special coordinators were appointed. I congratulate all involved and in particular our former President, the distinguished Ambassador of Colombia, our friend, Camilo Reyes, for his efforts.

Nevertheless, I will not conceal the initial scepticism I expressed in our group discussions about having the Conference on Disarmament head off in this direction. My concern was that we might relieve the pressure for advances on substance by engaging in a flurry of action on procedural issues. As time went on, however, it became more difficult to maintain this argument. Since key players did not appear to feel themselves under any pressure to reach an accommodation on issues of substance, the choice effectively became between continuing a total and stultifying inactivity or engaging in the kind of work that has now been mandated.

The best outcome will be if the initiation of this work gives a sense of renewal to the Conference and becomes a prelude to, rather than a substitute for, substantive work. The worst outcome will be a sense that the Conference on Disarmament is now justifying its existence and that we can be a little more comfortable in leaving the substantive challenges on hold.

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Having said that, there is manifestly useful work to be done in relation to the structures and functioning of the Conference on Disarmament. There is need for radical updating to reflect new circumstances. Given the slightly theatrical feel to much of our proceedings, I will borrow a theatrical metaphor - the audience has changed, the script has changed and yet we retain the props, the stage directions and the admission policy of another era.

This body was formed in the era of iron-tight alliances. We believe that under its current structures it encourages thinking along these lines. This creates first frustration and then lethargy. We encourage the coordinators to think imaginatively as to how the mould might be broken.

I would make just a few specific comments on the series of interlinked issues to be considered by the three special coordinators. On enlargement, our position is unsurprising in the light of our own experience. I repeat what I said on the date of our admission: "Outside or inside the Conference on Disarmament, Ireland's conviction on the desirability of expansion remains unchanged."

Significant further expansion would have major implications for the effective functioning of the Conference, not least in further calling into question the relevance of our current grouping systems.

As well as perpetuating the rigidities of another era, the current system allows one or two members of a group to hide behind a coordinator who must simply record lack of agreement. The informal caucusing which has characterized, for example, the later stages of the negotiation toward the protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention has underlined the need for and benefit of fluidity in such a process. The mismatch of the group structure to the real world would become even more evident in the event of the launch of a work programme which contained all the currently proposed elements.

As a counterbalance to such a loosening of structure, the appointment of a President for a longer term than is currently permitted could provide continuity and enhance the prospects of achieving defined goals within a term of office.

On the agenda, I will be brief. The agenda needs to relate to current realities, have the possibility of a longer duration than one year, and be capable of regular review and amendment. Modernization of the agenda, desirable as it can be and difficult as it may be to agree on, would, however, be an empty exercise in the absence of a will to give it expression through work. And of course, one outcome of the current exercise, which we must avoid at all costs, would be to allow the agenda to become an annual bone of contention and one more reason why the Conference is unable to get down to work.

Another issue which requires attention is the need for a formalized mechanism for input from the non-governmental disarmament community. There would be a compelling argument even if this were a body which was pursuing a full and active work programme. In our current circumstances, it is both compelling and potentially liberating. Whether in relation to small

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arms, anti-personnel landmines or other weapons which impact heavily upon civilian populations, civil society has established the right not just to be heard but actively to participate in our deliberations, a right which is effectively denied at present.

Mr. President, I have dwelt a good deal on substance given the indulgence that is offered to a departing ambassador. But I also wanted to use this opportunity to express my warm and genuine appreciation to colleagues here. I have hugely enjoyed your comradeship and hospitality, I have learned a great deal from your experience and insights and eloquence, and I value greatly the friendships I have formed. Successive presidents have been extraordinary in their energy and commitment and all members of the secretariat - under the wise and benevolent leadership of Mr. Petrovsky, whom I thank - all members have shown themselves true professionals in the best sense of the term. I thank you all.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Ireland for her statement and for the kind words she has expressed to the Chair, and once more, reiterate our most sincere wishes for her success in her new post. As you will not be all that far away, we hope to be able to see you often here in Geneva. We wish you every success in your personal life and your work.

I now give the floor to the representative of Algeria, Ms. Nassima Baghli.

Ms. BAGHLI (Algeria) (translated from French): Thank you, Mr. President, especially since I am taking the floor after the distinguished Ambassador of Ireland, whose skills and expertise are so acclaimed.

Mr. President, the Algerian delegation would like, first of all, to congratulate you on your accession to the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. It is convinced that, under your wise leadership, the Conference will be able in an effective manner to accomplish its proper mission, in accordance with the mandate conferred upon it.

The Algerian delegation would also like to take this opportunity to express its appreciation for the efforts made by your predecessor, Mr. Camilo Reyes of Colombia, with a view to restarting our work and bringing the Conference out of the impasse in which it has been held. His earnest application and dedication to his task have borne fruit, since we have just adopted a proposal put forward by him which, we hope, will breathe new life into the Conference on Disarmament.

I would also like to express our fullest appreciation for the work accomplished by the ambassadors who have held the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament since the beginning of the 2001 session, namely, Ambassador Christopher Westdal of Canada, Ambassador Juan Enrique Vega of Chile and Ambassador Hu Xiaodi of China. All three spared no efforts in their endeavours to move the work of the Conference forward and, for that, they deserve our full recognition and appreciation.

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Allow me also to express appreciation to Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, whose advice and recommendations have given us valuable assistance and also to express our warm welcome to Mr. Enrique Román-Morey, who has joined us as Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference.

As I remarked earlier, the Conference has just adopted, on the initiative of the Colombian Ambassador, a decision to appoint three special coordinators on the issues of the review of its agenda, the expansion of its membership and its improved and effective functioning.

This proposal, which was supported by all the delegations represented here, should enable us to restart our work and to consider issues of great importance for the future of this body.

These three points in fact directly touch on the very structures of the Conference, on its effectiveness and its ability to find ways of ensuring its improved operation and thereby to tackle more effectively the international security issues which we face.

With regard to the issue of expansion, we in the Algerian delegation have, on several previous occasions, reiterated our wish that the Conference should be open to every State which expresses the will to be a full member. By this, we can only gain, both in terms of representativeness and legitimacy.

At the same time, and together with many other delegations, we believe that the Conference on Disarmament should be open to non-governmental organizations, particularly at the current time when civil society is becoming increasingly involved in the affairs of the world. This body should not try and swim against the tide, at the risk of being perceived as a last bastion, resistant to all efforts to render it more transparent. The Conference would certainly gain enormously by taking on board the points of view and opinions of non-governmental organizations.

We should express our thanks to Ambassador Günther Seibert of Germany, Ambassador Petko Draganov of Bulgaria and Ambassador Prasad Kariyawasam of Sri Lanka, who have taken on the task of coordinating the three committees. The Algerian delegation would like to assure them that they can count on its immediate and total support in their work. They face a daunting task, since their purpose will be to ensure that the Conference finds ways and means of more effectively discharging its mandate and, thereby, responding more fully to international realities which are in a constant state of flux.

These tasks, important though they might be, should not, however, obscure from us the substantive issues on the Conference's agenda.

As it enters the third millennium, humankind has embarked on a new era of its history. The aspirations of peoples for peace, for security and for well-being have never been so strong. The century which has just begun brings with it great hopes. Extraordinary progress has been

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made by humankind over the last few years. This progress must be consolidated and made accessible to the entire planet. For this, it is more than ever essential that a climate of international security be ushered in.

As the sole international multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament, the Conference on Disarmament is the melting pot in which all views and initiatives undertaken to develop strategies to foster a safe international environment must come together. It should be fully aware of the responsibilities which have been conferred upon it and should endeavour, without delay, to embark on its programme of work.

A working basis is already in place for this. This is the Amorim proposal contained in document CD/1624, which, in the view of all, constitutes a basis for future intensive consultations. This proposal arose consequent to a series of proposals submitted, among others, by Venezuela and Algeria, with a view to bringing the Conference out of its current state of inertia and developing a programme of work.

We know that the Amorim proposal represents an acceptable minimum to some and a maximum to others, but it is important now that each of us demonstrates good will and flexibility to enable the Conference to start negotiations without any further delay. These negotiations should, as a matter of priority, bear on nuclear disarmament with a view to establishing a phased programme for the eventual destruction and total elimination of nuclear weapons.

It should be recalled that, pursuant to the outcome of the Sixth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the nuclear Powers have committed themselves, unequivocally, to the path of nuclear disarmament and of general and even complete disarmament.

Regrettably, we are forced to observe that, to date, the enthusiasm and promises that characterized that memorable meeting have not been followed by any action and that no progress has been made in this area. We strongly deplore the fact that no ad hoc committee with a clear mandate to negotiate on nuclear disarmament has yet been established.

We should recall, furthermore, that the International Court of Justice, in its advisory opinion of July 1996, stressed that States had an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.

The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the extension of the nuclear-weapon-free zones and the universalization of the NPT are further measures which could help in attaining this goal.

We must act today to ensure that States possessing nuclear weapons honour their commitments and give a sign of good will by showing their readiness for dialogue. In this context, the breaking off of the dialogue which could have marked the completion of the START process and of the ABM treaties sends a disturbing signal.

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My delegation has already had the occasion to quote, here in this forum, the work written jointly by the Nobel prize-winners for physics, the Frenchman, Georges Charpak and the American, Richard Garwin, entitled Will-o'-the-Wisps and Nuclear Mushrooms, in which they show how nuclear arsenals can be reduced at minimum cost and deterrence levels maintained, taking due account of the security imperatives of the nuclear-weapon States. They also explain that the Russian and American negotiators aim to retain in 2003 15,000 strategic war heads, when fewer than 100 would be sufficient to maintain their deterrent capability.

This brings us to reflect on the whole issue of nuclear deterrence and to wonder what place there now is for nuclear weapons, after the end of the cold war, and, consequently what grounds there are for the current military doctrines and what shape they are assuming, and also to question the place of those doctrines which helped prop up the East-West confrontation.

Now that that confrontation has come to an end, we may legitimately expect some detente in international relations and, accordingly, a redefinition of the doctrine of deterrence.

If anything, however, the situation has even grown more tense. In April 1999, a military alliance stated that nuclear weapons would remain a component of its military posture, which takes us further from the goals of the NPT, since this Treaty is the cornerstone for all efforts towards this end, both with regard to non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, which should be accessible to all countries.

A treaty banning fissile materials for the manufacture of nuclear weapons could mark the next stage in our efforts to build on the momentum that came out of the last review of the NPT, but, if this Treaty is to be a real accomplishment in the work of disarmament as we understand it, stockpiles must also be taken into consideration. We know the various views on this point. If this issue could be negotiated by a special committee, which, in our view, should be established as soon as possible this would enable us to explore these issues in depth with a view to concluding, at the earliest possible stage, a treaty on this matter, which would mark an important step along the road to nuclear disarmament.

Prevention of an arms race in outer space is another task that we must not neglect. This issue constitutes another aspect of global security. Outer space is the common heritage of all humankind and should never be militarized. If this were to happen, it would only encourage a return to the arms race, with all the attendant dangers. The existing treaties which provide for the non-militarization of outer space should be strengthened by a treaty or a convention solemnly enshrining this principle and this priority is also one which our Conference must not ignore.

Our response to these challenges requires each of us to manifest a spirit of dialogue and openness. Only on this condition will we be able genuinely to launch our work programme and to live up to the expectations of the international community.

Only in this case will those among us who long ago renounced any ambition of the military use of the atom and opted instead for the development of its civil and peaceful use be confirmed in the rightness of our choice.

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Clearly, all these issues are part of a larger framework, that of the definition of a collective security now at the dawn of the third millennium and, therefore, the definition of a world in which we wish to live and which we hope to hand on to future generations.

It is for this reason that the stalemate in the Conference causes us such disquiet and it is our sincere hope that the Conference will be able to bridge the divergences among its members and live up to the expectations of the international community with regard to peace and security.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Algeria for her statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

I now give the floor to the representative of Peru.

Mr. LAURIE-ESCANDON (Peru) (translated from Spanish): I have requested the floor to convey our gratitude for your expressions of solidarity with our people in the tragic situation currently afflicting Peru as a result of the severe earthquake and the aftershocks which continue to be felt. My country is working on its recovery, thanks to the efforts of all our fellow countrymen and the generous assistance provided by various countries in the international community. It is the sincere wish of my delegation that the sort of efforts and resources that have been mobilized, at both national and international levels, in response to a natural disaster such as that which has just struck Peru, could serve as an example for the prevention of another type of disaster, resulting this time from the hand of man. I also take the opportunity to convey our pleasure at seeing you assume the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and to wish you every success in its meetings, and to pledge the full support of the delegation of Peru in your work.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): If no other delegation wishes to take the floor, that concludes our work for today. We have also concluded the second part of the 2001 session of the Conference on Disarmament.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Thursday, 2 August 2001, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.